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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PROCLAIM 'HUMAN RIGHTS DAY' IN L.A. COUNTY

LOS ANGELES – Recognizing the results of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations' annual report on hate crimes, the Board of Supervisors today joined Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas in proclaiming December 10 as Human Rights Day throughout the County.

"We hold up the aspirations that the human rights of all residents will be recognized and respected," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said during the presentation, adding that the LACCHR's most recent report indicates that "we still have a long way to go."

In 2008, there were 728 hate crimes reported in the County; 35 fewer than the previous year, according to the Commission's report.

"That's a four percent decline, and that's welcome news," the Supervisor said. He highlighted that racial/ethnic and national origin hate crimes – the largest category of hate crimes – declined a sizable 16 percent from the previous year.

While crimes targeting African Americans decreased, the group still remains the largest group of victims by far – approximately 61 percent of all racial hate crimes, despite comprising only nine percent of the County's population.

Latinos continue to be the second largest group of hate crime victims, and notably, the numbers are virtually unchanged from the previous year.

The greatest number of hate crimes occurred in the San Fernando Valley, followed by the Metro region of Los Angeles. When the number of hate crimes are compared to the population, the highest rate of hate crimes occurred in the Antelope Valley.

“Every member of the Board of Supervisors has an interest in diminishing hate crimes and increasing our community awareness of the work we have yet to do in this arena,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “We declare this Human Rights Day with that intention for us all.”

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